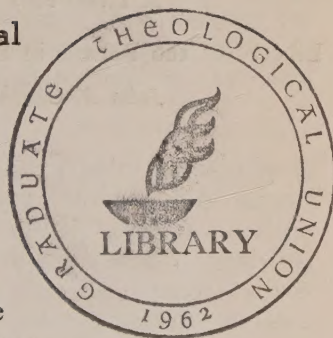


JEEVADHARA
The Problem of Man

MAN AND THE WORLD

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Editorial

The expression "Man *and* the World" cannot be said to be non-problematic. The conjunction 'and', besides indicating that man and the world are separate entities, may also create the impression that human existence is something totally outside and above the world. This was what Nietzsche implied when he criticized the presumption entailed by the 'and' that separates man and the world. It is no wonder that man, who, though part of the world, knows himself and the world, and who has to maintain a conscious and free relationship with the world, finds this relationship a problem. In fact, our understanding of the world depends not only on how we understand the world but also on how we understand ourselves and how we relate ourselves to the world.

In this light it is natural that there should be divergent and conflicting world visions in the fields of religion and philosophy. This present issue of *Jeevadhara* is devoted to examining the meaning and truth of some of these world views, and to inquiring how it is possible to establish a more human, and at the same time world-oriented, view of the world.

There is a general impression that Hindu philosophy is world-negating, and the Advaitic principle "the world is *maya*" is often brought forward as an instance of this attitude. Francis D'Sa, who explores the concept of *maya* in the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis and the Systems, makes it clear that we cannot take it for granted that the Western view is completely positive or that the Eastern view is completely negative. In the *RgVeda* and the *Brahmanas*, *maya* does not signify illusory impression, but rather power, capacity, knowledge, technique and the like, and the word is not generally used to compare the world of reality and that of mere appearance. Sankara uses the term sometimes in the traditional sense of a miraculous power, and sometimes connected with illusory knowledge. The latter use of the term gave occasion to the interpretation that the world is a mere illusion. Sankara compares the relationship between God and creation with that of a magician and his magical creation in order to indicate the unreal character of the world when compared with that of God. The reason for this

comparison is that the magician and his magical productions are not on the same plane. But magic is real on its own plane; it becomes an illusion only when looked at from the level of the magician. Failure to see the real point of comparison gives occasion to the illusory theory. From comparing the relationship of God to the world with that of the magician to his magic it does not follow that the world is unreal on our level and from our point of view. In the perspective of absolute reality which is without distinctions things that are subject to evolution may be designated as unreal. Hence behind the principle that the world is *māyā* there lies the transcendental experience of all things as One. This view ascribes all importance to the Supreme, and shows the relative character of the world and of worldly values. But that experience does not deny the world nor look on it with contempt.

If the world view of Advaita leads to different interpretations, Kautilya's *Arthasastra* and Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra* undoubtedly view the world and temporal life as most positive. In fact, *Arthasastra* gives undue importance to temporal authority and material wealth. Kautilya holds as legitimate any method or means of upholding the power and privileges of the king. This point of view, which stands above righteousness and morality, recalls of Machiavelli who, centuries later, formulated a political philosophy in the West. In view of the importance and value ascribed to sensual desire and pleasure the perspective of *Kamasutra* is as worldly as *Arthasastra*. While showing how one can enjoy sensual pleasures to the utmost, Vatsyayana does not at all consider how such enjoyment affects other persons.

When compared with *Arthasastra* and *Kamasutra* the special value of the Tamil sacred book *Tirukkural* becomes clear. The article by Xavier Irudayaraj brings out the worldly morality and human relevance of *Tirukkural* showing that it not only ascribes value and importance to life in the world, but also shows how worldly existence can be reconciled with other values and morality. It is significant that among the traditional four *Purusharthas* (goals of human life) the Kural speaks only about *dharma* (*aram*), *artha* (*porul*) and *kama* (*impam*); Thiruvalluvar thinks that since *moksa* (liberation) is the consequence of the other three, it does not need any special treatment. In his view *dharma* is not a means to liberation. Nor is *moksa* a compensation in the other world for

the unfulfilled desires of this world. Good is not what we receive from others but what we give others even at the risk of losing heaven. It does not mean that morality has no relation to happiness in this world. In fact, righteousness provides fame and wealth; real happiness is that which results in a moral life. Thirukkural sees love, marriage and family life as highly valuable, but they will bear fruit only if goodness and friendship are added to them. In this sense, for Thiruvalluvar *dharma* and family life are one and the same; he even questions the need for austerities if observance of *dharma* is possible through family life. Equally valuable as love and family life are wealth and temporal prosperity. In the view of the *kural* temporal well-being, at least on a moderate level, is necessary for happiness in life.

It is remarkable that *Thirukkural* values not only *dharma* but also the temporal fruits of moral life. In such an outlook that gives equal importance and value to action and the fruit of action there is little place for the attitudes expressed in certain statements of the Gita like: "Our responsibility is for action; it is wrong even to think about the fruits of action"; "pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat are all the same"; "When the call of action sounds one has only to look whether it is one's duty or not, and not whether it is killing or being killed" (cf. *Gita* 2: 19-22. 37: 47-48).

Giving importance and value to the fruit of action is, in fact, necessary for evaluating terrestrial realities and for judging the morality of human actions. That an act is morally good or bad is not an isolated fact; its morality depends on what it is, and how it affects, the one who acts and those who are acted upon. The fruit of action which is distinct from the act is related to the moral dimension of the act as its essential element. Hence if the fruit of action is ignored as trivial, the foundation of morality becomes a mere command that has no interior relation to life and action or to a natural order that cannot be understood or questioned. Otherwise a particular act should be moral for no reason or convention at all. The problem is that this attitude can argue any act to be moral. Giving undue importance to the fruit of action would be as bad as excluding it from all considerations of morality and taking it for something trivial or devoid of any value.

The New Testament uses the word 'world' with considerable differences in meaning, sometimes positive and sometimes negative. On the one hand man is forbidden to identify himself with the world, considered as a power pitted against God. On the other, man is commanded to accept it as created and redeemed by God. In explaining the world vision of the Bible, J. Lambrecht shows the relation of the world, as God's creation, to Christian hope. He chooses Rom. 8: 18-30 as his text. What does Paul mean when he says that the world which is doomed to nothingness on account of man's sin, is looking forward to the glorious liberation of the children of God? As for Paul, salvation is not the destruction of matter. It is true that he lays stress on the resurrection and glorification of the body. In his conception, not only the body but the whole world will have its share of the future salvation. The universe that is groaning under the weight of the first man's sin will share the glory of the children of God. Only that it can hardly be explained. Though it is not true that the world will continue to be as it exists now, it would be wrong to ignore it as if it were a non-partner in the glory of salvation. It is certain that the world which participates in the glory is the same as that which God glorifies. The same is the one which man changes and perfects, as can be understood from Paul's words.

World visions, inasmuch as they are conceptions of man concerning the world, and relationship to the world, have necessarily a human dimension. There is a great difference between seeing and accepting realities as they are, and looking at and assessing them in their relation and their usefulness to man. In this respect world visions may be universal or anthropocentric. Both are ancient and based on strong arguments. But the latter view is gaining ground today.

A world vision is often marred by a false sense of freedom. Hence it should be seen in its correct perspective, in relation not only to God and man, but to the whole universe, to the various coordinates such as human corporeity, the human realized in space-time, nature, ecology, etc. The very conception of liberty as the condition of the children of God is a leap forward in our vision of the world. John B. Chethimattam deals with the liberty of man in its wider perspective.

As a result of development conceived as growth in production, income and the conveniences of life, limited natural resources are being exhausted and material goods recklessly used and wantonly destroyed, and the live atmosphere which is equally essential to man and beast and vegetables is polluted. In the developed countries new problems arise though bodily comforts are multiplied. It would thus appear that a thought pattern which gives importance to sharing rather than supremacy, non-violence rather than aggression and universal brotherhood rather than anthropocentrism, is conducive to self-realization.

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The World as Maya

The Meaning of the World in Hindu Theology

Introduction

A murderer is a man who has put an end to another man's life. Though he might have 'murdered' only once, still society insists on calling such a man a 'murderer'. On the other hand you may have once written an article or played basket-ball but no one (in his senses) would call you a writer or a basket-ball player! May be such inconsistent usage is meant to stress the gravity of an action like murder. Whatever the reason, every language displays words which do get a 'rough' deal in the course of their history. Take, for example, the word *māyā*. It has entered the English language accompanied by the meaning 'illusion'.¹ The question that can be raised is: was *māyā* in the sense of 'illusion' (subconsciously) presupposed by scholars researching the scriptures or did the history of the term culminate in the meaning 'illusion'? Though it is not the purpose of this article primarily to investigate the 'illusory' connotation that *māyā* has come to acquire, still it will not be out of place to locate this meaning in the proper historical context, since this would contribute better towards the understanding of the world as *māyā*.

Etymology of *māyā*

Three different etymologies have been put forward. Firstly, *māyā* is supposed to be connected with the root *mā-* 'to measure', 'mete out'. Secondly, another root *mā-* (related to *man*) 'to think', 'believe', 'imagine', has been suggested. Lastly, *māyā* is believed to be derived from *mi-* 'to change', 'transform'.²

1. Cfr. Oxford English Dictionary.

2. J. Gonda discusses in detail the varied attempts to examine the etymology of this mysterious and mystifying word in his excellent article "The 'Original' Sense and the Etymology of Skt. *Māyā*" in his book *Four Studies in the Language of the Veda*, Mouton & Co.'s - Gravenhage, 1959. The substance of my article is based on this work.

These three etymologies have not been able to explain consistently the meaning of *māyā* in its different contexts. The reason seems to be that the approach has been mainly somewhat *a priori*, that is to say, it is presupposed that a term (like *māyā*) has (and should have) one and only one meaning. J. Gonda rightly insists that "In examining the ancient Indian views of the activities and interrelations of powers and cosmic energies we should, *inter alia*, realize, on the one hand, the full extent of their spheres of influence, and on the other hand, the manifold identifications and amplifications which the processes and activities attributed to powers and divinities are liable to undergo. Verbs indicating the ideas of making, creating, fashioning, may be complemented by a very wide range of objects. The same expressions may apply to the production of handicraft, the generation of offspring, the performance of beneficent or maleficent rites, and the creation of the world."³

Having said this Gonda proceeds to explain why he prefers to believe that the root *mā* is etymologically related to *māyā*. *Mā*-does not merely mean 'to measure how big a thing is' (as is too often presupposed) but 'to determine by means of measures how big a thing should be'.⁴ This implies the fashioning, building, constructing, creating of a thing, *first* in the mind, then in the world of space and time. Gonda suggests the hypothesis "that *mā*-expressed the sense of realizing in the phenomenal world- and this implies in three-dimensional space-, by applying a special technique such as 'measuring', what was mentally conceived; by converting an idea into dimensional actuality. Thus Varuna may have had an idea of the circumference of the earth before he converted it into actuality by a creative act of 'measuring': [RgVeda] 8,42,1.... Just as an architect, before building a house and even before marking off its site, draws a plan after having conceived the idea of building a house of a particular form and dimensions in his mind, the god—who is *dhīra*—must have planned out in his mind an idea or scheme before undertaking the task of converting it into a visible and tangible world."⁵ To grasp this we could refer

3. (Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 167)

4. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 168.

5. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pp. 168-169.

to a word like 'real-ize' which contains two realms of meanings, viz., first of understanding, then of *materializing* the idea.

The adjective *amita*, Gonda suggests, does not necessarily mean 'immeasurable, boundless, infinite'; "those using the adjective considered themselves unable to form an idea of size, quantity, dimensions, of an entity, they could not understand how a thing or phenomenon had been planned, schemed out, determined, established, converted into actuality, so as to be able to account for its size, quantity, dimensions; hence "unmeasurable, unmeasured" in the normal meanings of these words."⁶

Gonda then takes up the various occurrences of the different compounds of *mā-* like *nir-mā-*, *anu-mā-*, *pari-mā-* and shows how his hypothesis with regard to the root *mā-* is consistently realized in them. For our purpose it is enough to take note of this double realm of meaning of the term *māyā*.⁷

History of *māyā*, *Māyā* in the R̥gveda

J. Gonda rightly warns at the outset: "Too often they [scholars] appear to have lost sight of two facts: first, that this term is frequently used, in a variety of contexts, without any bearing upon the great problem of the 'reality' of the phenomenal world as compared with *brahman*, and in the second place, that it does not always refer to illusions, fascination, delusions: that it is far from denoting always pseudorealities, or realities or activities of an artificial or misleading character. It is true that the word is sometimes used in connection with jugglers and deceptive activities, but that is no reason for concluding that "illusion or delusion" is its main, or even its original, meaning. Speaking generally, the term *māyā*, which is found in a large number of passages in pre- or non-Vedantic texts, and which is of frequent occurrence already in the *Veda* expresses a great variety of connotations which may, for want of something better, be expressed by such English terms as "power, wisdom, subtle device", and be defined somewhat as follows: "incomprehensible insight. wisdom,

6. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pp. 171-172.

7. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pp. 167-179.

judgement and power enabling its possessor to create something or to do something, ascribed to mighty beings".⁸

The word *māyā* is found more than a hundred times in the R̥gveda and the interesting thing is that Sāyana, the R̥gvedic commentator *par excellence*, does not always comment on it in the same way. "Sometimes, e. g. 5, 30, 6, where Indra is described as vanquishing the demon Vṛtra—who is likewise characterized by the possession of this power—by his *māyā*: *ahim..../ pra māyabhir māyinam saksad indrah*, he resorts to the terms *śakti*—“power, energy”, and *kapaṭa*—“fraud, deceit, cheating”, that is to say Indra’s *māyā* is *śakti*, that of his great adversary *kapaṭa*: *māyinam: kapaṭavantam*. This explanation is instructive. Power as such is ambivalent. If it is in the possession of, and put into practice by, those beings who are active for man’s interests and the public weal it is good and useful power, if it is wielded by ‘demons’, enemies, and malignant or destructive beings, it is considered evil, deceitful, and pernicious. This difference in interpretation, which has also found its way into modern dictionaries and handbooks must, in the main, be ascribed to this ‘ambivalent character’ of the power concept itself. Like other such potencies *māyā* is ethically indifferent. Power enjoys, in the archaic and so-called primitive civilizations, no moral value whatever. The Maruts who by flying in the air and bringing rain were benefactors of mankind, are described as *sumāyā*—, an adjective not correctly translated by “guter Anschläge voll” (Petr. Dict.) or “having excellent counsels or plans” (Monier-Williams and others) or “Zauberkünstler” (Geldner), but if malicious men moved through the air they were no doubt considered *durmāyu*—, they “used bad arts” (cf. RV. 3, 30, 15). RV. 1, 88, 1, describing the Maruts as flying like birds and bringers of rain, characterizes these divinities by the epithet *sumāyāh* which undoubtedly expresses the idea of being, in a positive and beneficent way (*su*—), possessed of a special ability of devising, contriving, or effecting something that is above human beings and passes normal human understanding.”⁹

Gonda, mainly following Sāyaṇa (it seems to me), suggests different but interconnected “translations” for *māyā* in different

8. Gonda, *Op.cit* pg. 126.

9. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pp. 127-128.

contexts: RV. 1, 167, 2: 'excellent or propitious wisdom, devices, or power to effect something extraordinary'¹⁰; RV. 3, 53, 8: 'a special ability to create forms, or rather... the inexplicable power of a High Being to assume forms, to project itself into externality, to assume an outward appearance, to appear in, or as, the phenomenal world'¹¹; RV. 3, 60, 1: 'marvellous skill'¹²; RV. 3, 27, 7: 'wisdom, judgment, knowledge, device'¹³; RV. 1, 144, 1: 'incomprehensible ability and activity'¹⁴. Briefly, "*Māyā* is the power, ability, or capacity of achieving the marvellous"¹⁵.

In order to understand *māyā* against the background of Vedic thinking Gonda reminds us "that most of those gods who are in the *Ṛgveda* described as being in possession of *māyā* are also characterized by adjectives or epithets which express such meanings as "wise", "knowing", "omniscient",¹⁶ "that the meaning and function of 'wisdom' and 'knowledge' are not the same in an archaic or so-called semi-primitive culture as in our modern highly specialized and differentiated civilization"¹⁷. "Practical knowledge, skill, dexterity, inventiveness, and resourcefulness resulting from training and experience were not only highly valued in daily life and admired, or feared, in others, but also attributed to divine beings who were able to perform deeds and to accomplish designs past understanding. In short, knowledge as power, power in social, economical, meteorological, cosmic, and eschatological respects."¹⁸

'Maya' in the 'Atharvaveda'

In the *Atharvaveda* *māyā* seems to be related in a special way to the *asuras*, though it is not their monopoly. (For instance the asura Maya is the architect of the gods.) *Asuramāyā* is the "power to achieve wonderful deeds inherent to lordship"¹⁹. It is

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10. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 128.
 11. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 128.
 12. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 129.
 13. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 130.
 14. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 130.
 15. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 132.
 16. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 144.
 17. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 145.
 18. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 146.
 19. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 158.

in the *Atharvaveda* 10, 8, 34 that the special sense of *māyā* that has become the commonplace in Indian philosophy appears for the first time.²⁰

“That where in gods and men were set
As spokes within the hub,
Wherein the waters’ flower by some uncanny power (*māyā*)
Was laid, of that I ask thee.”²¹

The problem of the One and the Many is found here for the first time in relation to *māyā*.

“Maya” in the ‘Brahmanas’

Even here in the *Brāhmaṇas māyā* is to be understood in the sense of incomprehensible wisdom, skill, ability. As such it is applied here not only to gods, demons and kings but also to the ritual and its utensils. However, even in the *Brāhmaṇas*, it is especially the quality of the asuras. In certain cases it may have the nuance of magical effect but it certainly is not the predominant meaning.²²

‘Maya’ in the ‘Upanisads’

Māyā occurs extremely rarely in the oldest *Upaniṣads*, and when it does it almost always has a meaning which is in line with Vedic usage. As a matter of interest the really most important passage is in the *Svetāśvatara-Upaniṣad* 4, 9 and 10:

9 "Hymns, sacrifices, rites and ordinances,
What was and what is yet to be,
[All] that the Vedas proclaim,—
All this does He who is possessed of creative power
(*māyā*) emit
From that [same syllable]; and by the same creative
power (*māyā*)
The other is therein constrained.

20. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 158.

21. R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*, London 1972. pg. 26.

22. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 164.

- 10 Creative power (*māyā*) is nature (*prakṛti*), this
must be known.
 And He who possesses it (*māyin*) is the Mighty Lord:
 By things that are but parts of Him
 This whole world is pervaded.”²³

✓ The problem of the One and the Many is here again touched upon but there seems to be no reference to ‘illusion’. “A being in possession of an unconceivable power of performing marvellous deeds creates, transforms, causes the phenomenal world – in a manner analogous to the activities of the ancient asuras and of jugglers – to emanate or to appear so that the individual becomes puzzled and bewildered.”²⁴

‘Maya’ in the ‘Bhagavadgita’

The seven occurrences of *māyā* in the *Gītā* can (and should) be interpreted in the sense of creative power unless it is proved that it goes against the context, and that a better, more coherent meaning is available. Even Sankara himself interprets 4.6 *ātmāmāyā* as *prakṛti*–.

‘Maya’ in ‘Gaudapada

It is agreed, on all hands, that Gaudapāda was deeply influenced by Buddhism.²⁵ His idealism seems to be of the subjective, psychological type. His use of the term *māyā*, which occurs not less than sixteen times in his short *Māṇḍukyakārikā*, brings in, for the first time, the nuance of ‘appearance’ and ‘illusion’. “This [world of] multiplicity is *māyā* (*māyāmātram idam dvaitam*, I, 17).

23. R. C. Zaehner, *Op.cit.* pg. 211.

24. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pp. 166–167.

25. Cfr. S. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* Vol. I pp. 420–429; P. Hacker, “Vivarta – Studien zur Geschichte der illusionistischen Kosmologie und Erkenntnistheorie der Inder” in *Abhandlungen der Geistesund Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse*, Jahrgang 1953. Nor. 5. pp. 207–208; C. Conio, *The philosophy of Mandukya Karika*, Varanasi, 1971. *Passim*.

‘Maya’ in Sankara

Paul Hacker²⁶ has pointed out that the word *māyā* is of relatively rare occurrence in Sankara’s *Bhāhmasūtrabhāṣya*. If taken with two other important terms in Sankara’s *Bhāṣya*, namely *nāmarūpā-* and *avidyā*, their (*māyā*, *nāmarūpā-*, *avidyā*) frequency of occurrence is 2:7:10. Much more frequent are words like *ātmā*, *paramātmā*, *īśvara-*, *parameśvara-*. Most surprising is the ascertainment that *māyā* is not at all a *terminus technicus* in Sankara’s commentary and that he does not develop any theory of *māyā*.²⁷

According to P. Hacker more than half the occurrences of *māyā* in Sankara’s commentary mean the ‘marvellous creative power’ of the Lord.²⁸ This is in line with the traditional understanding of *māyā*.

There is however another way in which Sankara uses the term. We shall have to examine this more closely since it is this use of the term that has come to mean ‘illusion’! The more important passages where *māyā* occurs are the following:

1. “The *parameśvara* is different from the *viññānātmā* when seen through *avidyā* (*avidyākālpitāt*) [as] embodied, agent [or doer], enjoyer; just as the magician (*māyāvī*) standing on the earth in really real form (*paramārtharūpo*) is distinct (*anyah*) from the magician (*māyāvinah*), who sword and shield in hand, [apparently] climbs into the air on a rope; or just as the space which is not limited (*anupādhiparicchinnā-*) is distinct from the space limited by [or in] a pot (*ghaṭākāśād upādhiparicchinād*.” I. 1. 17.

2. “The one and only *parameśvara* who is unchangeably eternal (*kūṭasthanitya-*) [and] the root of consciousness (*viññāna-dhātu-*) multiplies himself (*anekadhā vibhāvyate*) with the help of

26. For the portion dealing with Sankara in this article I am indebted to P. Hacker’s very valuable article “Eigentümlichkeiten der Lehre und Terminologie Sankaras: Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara” in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, (ZDMG) Band 100-Heft 1, 1950

27. P. Hacker, ZDMG pp. 268-272.

28. P. Hacker, ZDMG pg. 271.

avidyā as the magician [multiplies himself] with the help of māyā (māyavā māyavivāḍ), though [really] there is no other vijñānadhātu." 1. 3. 19.

3. "The omniscient (sarvajña-) Lord of the All (sarveśvaro)... is the cause of the continuance (sthirīkaraṇa) of the created world (utpannasya jagato) through the fact of His immanence (nityantṛyena) as the magician (māyavivāḍ) [is the cause of the continuance] of his magic (māyayāḥ)." II. 1. 1.

4. "And there is another analogy (distanto): just as the magician (māyavāḍ) remains untouched (na samspṛśyate) at all times (i.e. past, present and future) by the magic which he has brought forth from himself (svayam prasūritayā māyayā) because [his magic] does not belong to [the same realm of] reality (avasturvat) [as he himself], in the same way the paramātma remains untouched by the saṁsāramāyā." II. 1. 9.

5. "Just as the magician, (māyavāḍ), by his [mere] will, effortlessly (mayasena) withdraws (apasaṁkharate) the magic which he has brought forth from himself (svayam prasūritam māyam) so too should the embodied (śarīro) [be able to] withdraw into himself this emanation (spṛṣṭum)." II. 1. 21. This argument is put forward by an opponent.

Moreover we have phrases like saṁsāramāyā (II. 1. 9), svapnadhāraṇamāyā (II. 1. 9.) and nāmarūpamāyā (II. 2. 2).

If we analyse these and similar texts we come to the following conclusions:

1) All such analogies that I have been able to locate in Sankara's Bhāṣya seem to me to be analogies of proportionality:

the magical trick	:	emanation (spṛṣṭum)
the magician		the emanating Lord

If we recall the scholastic example of the analogy of proportionality (the *essentia* of God is related to His *esse* as the *essentia* of man is related to his *esse*), we shall perhaps remember that the aim of such analogies is not so much to unravel the mystery that God is as to make us realize that what for us is incomprehensible need not be in itself unintelligible!

2) According to Sankara's world-view the magical trick is not on the same level of reality as the magician, just as the dream is not on the same level of reality as the dreamer. This is not always properly understood. When we, for example, speak of our dreams we are speaking, so to say, from a 'higher' level. But if we were to speak of creation as the dream of the Lord then we (who are a part of this dream) would be speaking of it from the 'lower' level. When we analyse our dreams, we realise the 'flimsy' reality that our dreams are. But suppose we found ourselves on the level of the dream (=dreaming-state), we would most probably not think so 'negatively' of the reality of our dream-state (as we are prone to do from the level of the waking-state). In order to understand Sankara's attitude to the world, we shall have to attain the experience of looking at the dreamer from the level of the dream in order to understand him. Or, we shall have to experience this world from the 'higher' level of the Creator. And this is the second point to be made in this context. Just as when we speak of dreams, we speak of them from a 'higher' view-point, so too we shall have to learn to speak of the world from the view-point of the Absolute. What makes things difficult for us is the fact that when we speak of dreams we speak of them from a 'higher' standpoint but when we speak of the Creator we speak of Him from a 'lower' standpoint!

<u>my dream</u>	:	<u>I as part of the Lord's dream</u>
I as dreamer		The dreaming Lord

If both the times I were speaking (and experiencing) from the same level of reality I would not find myself on the level of *avidyā*. The negative connotation of dream reality that we pick up from the waking state, we tend to attribute to the world and this is inadmissible. This is the real state of *avidyā*, of *māyā*.

Sankara himself uses the word *avidyā* (which is not for him, as it is in later Vedānta, a power which causes the world of multiplicity) much more than *māyā* and is for him the original error itself.²⁹ For him *avidyā* is the state in which we mix up the subject *par excellence* with the object (or in other words the

29. H. Hacker, ZDMG pg. 240.

subject as such is reduced to an object), the *ātmā* to the *anātmā*, *satya-* to *anṛtya-* (Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya I. 1. 1).³⁰ For Sankara *māyā* and *avidyā* do not always mean the same thing. But sometimes they do. Though *avidyā* never means the marvellous creative power of the Lord, they seem to be synonyms when they speak of mixing up the levels of reality.

Avidyā and its other synonym *mithyājñāna-* are not psychological but ontological concepts. The false knowledge that *avidyā* and *mithyājñāna* refer to is not psychological knowledge (say, of a rope that is mistaken for a snake, which seems to be the position of Gaudapāda) but the realm in which two levels of reality are mixed up in such a way that the qualities of the lower are attributed to the higher. True, the examples of the rope mistaken for a snake, the world understood as a dream, etc., are examples of psychological knowledge but, as pointed out above, the *tertium comparationis* is not 'dream' (to take one example only) but the relation of the dream to the dreamer.

At no time does Sankara want this world to be understood as a projection of the mind, as an illusion, or a dream that is not to be taken seriously. When Sankara takes over the traditional analysis of the states of consciousness, he takes over all the four states seriously, but only as seriously as they deserve. For far too long the 'world-and-life-affirming optimism' of the West and the 'World-and-life-denying pessimism' of the East have been glibly swallowed. It is necessary to be as critical towards the one as towards the other. To say that this world and all that has to do with it is transient, and that therefore we should not treat it as an absolute value is not 'world-and-life-denying pessimism' but critical realism. To refuse to build a house on a bridge is sheer commonsense.

30. Sankara uses another term '*mithyājñāna-*' as a synonym for *avidyā*. Later advaita Vedānta has changed its terminology considerably even in this matter. Sankara's *avidyā* is later considered by his followers the stuff of which the world of multiplicity consists and *mithyājñāna-* is understood as the effect of *avidyā*.

It is unfairly said of Sankara that he does not take the world of becoming seriously. This is certainly incorrect. Because he experiences the world of change and at the same time he seemed to have experienced the realm of Being and non-change, he articulated a system which would do justice both to the one as to the other. Philosophically it was found impossible to 'explain' how the Lord creates, out of what He creates and why He creates (if *ex definitione* the Lord is one whose desires are perfectly fulfilled). If reality is experienced as *sat* (being, unchangeable), then what becomes and changes, what has an origin and an end, will have to be said to be *asat*. Now to explain the 'relation' of *sat* to *asat* in the normal categories of human causality is impossible; whatever the model of philosophic expression we may choose to solve this problem it will land us in insoluble contradictions.

It is in this context that Sankara has recourse to *avidyā* (and sometimes to *māyā*). We have according to Sankara certain experiences which can act as analogies. We see the magician do things which normally do not 'exist'. When one mistakes the rope for a snake there is really no snake but because the experience is real it has its effect (of shock and fright). These and such expressions have unfortunately been interpreted *descriptively* with the consequence that the world too has been said to be a flimsy unreality like the snake-rope experience. The concept of *avidyā* points to a state where two different levels of reality are confused. And the examples Sankara uses are analogies to express this state of affairs.

For Christians this should not prove too difficult. Jesus too speaks of the Kingdom of God only in parables which are more to be experienced than to be explained. No sensible man would ever think of interpreting these parables as *describing* the Kingdom of God! They are meant to evoke in us an experience of and a taste for the Kingdom through the language of human experience.

Furthermore the experience of *māyā* began very early in the history of the Indian peoples. Similar to the developmeat of dogma in Christian tradition that of *māyā* in its different facts has been experienced at different times (as has been shown in this sketchy survey). If words have a real meaning and are not mere *flatus vocis*

the different names used for Jesus in the New Testament (Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David, etc.) are not mere synonyms but point to the different facets of the mystery of God in Jesus. Similarly the experience of *māyā* though differently articulated in different contexts points to the different aspects of the same experience.³¹

What is this experience?

It is impossible to express any religious or mystical experience adequately in words. What one can at the most do is to use language as mere pointers, that is to say, language that merely points in a definite direction. Such language necessarily picks and chooses (not just arbitrarily) because human language of necessity tends to 'categorize'. But one who has a feel for the language (a poet, for instance) can choose it in such a way that the limits of the categories he uses are somewhat (though not wholly) 'loosened'.

If now we use pointer-language to speak of the experience that is hinted at by the term *māyā* we shall have to say that first and foremost it is an experience of limitation, of being limited; secondly, it is an experience of the non-finite. In addition to this the experience of limitation though distinct is not 'separate' from that of the nonfinite. Changing and changeable reality is experienced as in itself non-intelligible but 'somehow' as being 'connected' with the changeless and unchangeable Reality. Our articulations and verbalisations being in the realm of *māyā* are bound to be not only paradoxical but even contradictory and as a matter of fact it is a part of our experience that we know (at different times) things which we cannot reconcile with one another. This is precisely the

31. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pg. 192, footnote 327: "Another opinion was voiced by B. Geiger, o.c., p. 220. n. 1, who was, however, right in emphasizing that in relation to various bearers of *māyā* different aspects were brought to the fore: Agni's *māyā* becomes manifest in his priestly function, that of the *Aśvins* enables them to render assistance (RV. 5, 78, 6), that of *Mitra* and *Varuna* is (RV. 5, 63, 7) mentioned in connection with their guardianship of the established order."

32. Gonda, *Op.cit.* pp. 193-194.

point. Because of the evidence that there is an experience of change as well as an experience of changelessness, we are caught up in an apparent contradiction. The experience of *māyā* is an experience of both the changeless and the changing at one and the same time. It is not reason but experience that *proves* the validity of *māyā*.

The basic insight that lies behind the expression that the world is *māyā* is based on a mystical experience of the One (*tad ekam*). Everything is to be viewed in this perspective; all our religious and ethical as well as socio-economic and political systems are to be built on this foundation. The implications of such a 'world-view' are far-reaching. On the one hand, it relativizes this world, its values and its virtues; on the other, it absolutizes the *unum necessarium*. Our theories and views about the ephemeral world will, according to this view, be merely of secondary importance and interest.

Conclusion

Gonda himself summarizes his masterly article thus: "Summarizing the above expositions it may be said that *māyā* is essentially one, that is to say that all its aspects have structural similarity, due to common origin, that being from the very beginning an unconceivable energy enabling its possessor to produce the marvellous, it was *inter alia* described as a power by means of which the 'wonders of nature' are brought about, forms come into being, the world is sustained; that the creation came to be regarded as the *māyā* of Higher Beings, or of the Highest, which as such is beyond human competence." For the purpose of this article it must be noted that the world as *māyā* is not a negative or pessimistic experience; in the prevailing world-view it is the experience of the finite on the background of the Infinite and of the changeable on the background of the Unchangeable.

Secular Ethics of Tiruvalluvar

The East and the West have influenced one another in a very real and not yet fully understood way from earliest times. It is undoubtedly a noteworthy fact that from Mylapur (from where Tiruvalluvar hails) on which the eyes of Christendom have ever rested as the sacred spot in India of Apostolic labour, comes Tirukural, much of whose teaching is an echo of the 'Sermon on the Mount'.¹

Tirukural has attracted the attention of scholars in other areas in our land and outside too.² We have several English translations of Tirukural by G. U. Pope, V. V. S. Iyer, V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, K. M. Balasubramaniam and others.³

Tirukural has elicited the admiration of quite a few Western servants. It may be interesting to recall what Alexander Pyatigorsky, the eminent Soviet Indologist, who translated Kural into Russian, has to say on relevancy of Tirukural to contemporary society:

"Tirukural is an integral homogeneous work of art, the author of which addresses neither king, subject nor priest but men. And he does not address man either as law-giver or prophet but as well-wisher, teacher and friend"⁴

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, too in his 'Indian Thought and its Development' observes, "with sure strokes the Kural draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity. On the most varied questions

1. cf. G.U. Pope - Introduction to the English translation of Tirukural, P. XX. SISS W - Madras, 1962

2. It has been translated into Telugu, Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, German & French

3. The citations in this article are based on the translation of G. U. Pope in 1886

4. Cited in Symposium on Tirukural - 1974, S. V. University, Tirupati P. 11

concerning the conduct of man to himself and to the world, its utterances are characterised by nobility and good sense...."⁵

Tradition⁶ declares that Tiruvalluvar composed his Kural in order that the Tamil people might have a Vedam of their own; and doubtless it has become an abiding authority on ethics for the Tamil country. Kural contains 133 chapters, constituted of 10 couplets for each chapter with a total of 1330 couplets, 'Kural' meaning the metre of the poem. It is divided into *aram* (Virtue), *porul* (Wealth), *inbam* (Happiness); three major principles of *justice*, *wealth* and *happiness* are treated. The first part deals with the virtue-domestic as well as ascetic. The second is concerned with wealth in the context of the State, and treats of the duties of the head of the state and his ministers. The third part describes and depicts the love before and after marriage.

Thus, prudence and prosperity, health and wealth, king and state, wife and household, virtues and vices, conduct and character are the major concerns of Tiruvalluvar. To the householder, the religious, the political leaders, men involved in education and economics, he has given wise and practical guidelines.

The aim here is to show the secular approach of Tirukkural to ethics: in the very words of the poet, his 'secular' understanding of the basic categories of morality as *aram* (virtue), *porul* (wealth), *inbam* (happiness).

1. A secular approach to life

In the Indian traditions, life's goals are classified as *Dharma - Artha - Kama - Moksham*.⁷ Tirukkural, however, treats of only three of these. Did the author leave his work incomplete? or did he refrain from any exposition of Moksha, because he resolved to take only a practical view of things? Chapters 35-37 in Kural give us the author's nearest approach to the subject.

5. Ibid

6. Most probably it belongs to the period between 500 B.C.-200 A.D. For it is cited in Cilapathikaram and Manimekalai which belong to the first or second cent.

7. Cf. Hitopadeca - 26th sloka

According to him, the objects of life are only three and the fourth comes as a natural consequence. Ordinarily people think that, by gaining entry into heaven, they can realise all their unfulfilled ambitions and longings in this world. But Tiruvalluvar's conception of Moksha (heaven) is totally different. His view can be gathered from the following couplets:

"He who lives a true life of a Householder on earth
will be placed among gods who live in heaven" (50)

"Are the pleasures of the world of the Lotus-eyed
(Vishnu),

Sweeter than reclining on the soft arms of one's
beloved?" (1103)

It must be remarked that the Tamil language has the same word *Inbam* to signify both human love and the divine bliss eternal; for it calls the former *cittinbam*- (lesser joy), and the latter the *perinbam* (fuller joy). Further in Tamil alone we have the same term *Vidu* (home) to signify both the human and the divine abode.

Virtue according to Tirukkural

Valluvar assures the righteous man (in chapter 4) that virtue is its own reward.

"Virtue begets honour as well as riches; if so,
Is there a greater good for mankind than virtue?" (31)

It is obvious that Valluvar wants to put even a righteous man at ease, as otherwise he might feel that 'if virtue were its own reward, it would be no longer human but supernatural'. However, he tells him peremptorily that virtue should be practised not to obtain a passport to heaven or to secure an antidote to rebirth, but to enrich and ennoble life on earth by radiating warmth and kindness and thereby obtain the supreme satisfaction of having selflessly served men and women.

The old idea of practising virtue to ensure a better life after death is to give place to an enlightened idea of selfless service to society here and now. Valluvar says - do not exploit the poor even if the cause is good; even if heaven is denied, you should give to the poor.

“Receiving, even out of the best motives, is evil;
Giving, even if heaven is denied thereby, is good” (222)

In this revolutionary message is contained a striving of the moral and social consciousness of the community to guard against any iniquitous development of the social order. And such a concept of virtue can be practised, according to Kural, only by one who is possessed of a pure mind. For, purity of mind is the whole of virtue, and without it, all the externals of religion are but empty show:

“Virtue is nothing but becoming pure of mind,
The rest is nothing but the empty and the pompous” (34).

Valluvar, as a practical philosopher, shows also the way to acquire such an attitude of mind:

“Virtue is attained by overcoming four evils
Envy, desire, anger and harsh words.” (35)

To him, *Aram* or its translation into English comprehensively connoting *virtue*, including *justice*, is the sheet anchor of the individual's life in relation to his family, his kith and kin, and in relation to society at large. Hence he asserts categorically with all the vehemence he can command:

“Happiness is that which springs solely out of virtue;
That which springs not from virtue gives neither joy
nor renown.” (39)

Hence, virtue, in the vision of Valluvar, is neither alien to man nor superimposed on him by any supernatural power.

The Kural affirms that married life based on love blossoms into virtue.

“Wedded life gains its purpose and receives fulfilment
if it is marked by love and virtue.” (45)

And

“Home life and virtue are the same
which spotless manhood too can claim.” (49)

Valluvar goes a step further and asks:

“Of what use is ascetic life,
If in wedded life you can practise virtue?” (46)

According to him, the crown of an unblemished domestic life is an enduring renown; he affirms that only those who help others and share their affluence with them, really live, earning the praise of their fellowmen. Others who do not earn such praise are as good as dead:

“They live who live without a blame
They don’t who live without a name.” (240)

2. Wealth and Welfare

Tiruvalluvar, in the second section of Kural – *Porul* (wealth) – deals with the moral conduct of individuals in relation to society in greater detail. As a social philosopher, he is primarily concerned with this world and interested in the proper and harmonious development of a society, ensuring social welfare through social justice.

According to him, a good country is one that is free from extreme poverty, endemic diseases and external aggressions (734). To obtain this threefold freedoms, the acquisition of wealth, he thinks, is of utmost importance.

“Waneless wealth is light that goes
To every land and gloom removes.” (753)

Valluvar has also illustrated the relation of wealth to love and benevolence by a beautiful comparison:

“Grace, the child of love, is nourished
By the wet-nurse of wealth cherished.” (757)

But, wealth by itself is no good, says Valluvar, unless it is equated to social welfare:

“All the wealth that toils give
Is meant to serve those who deserve.” (212)
“The idle wealth of unsought man
Is a poison-fruit tree amidst a town” (1008)

However, Valluvar does not give any set of rules for instant application to any and every problem. He is no stickler for rules and a code of conduct irrespective of their effects on man and society. His outlook is essentially humanistic, intensely concerned with the total happiness and welfare of the people. He is, therefore,

averse to exposing people to unnecessary misery and suffering merely for the sake of upholding a moral idea. His pragmatic approach to human problem can as well be inferred from the following couplet:

“Even falsehood partakes of the nature of a truth
But only if it produced just a harmless good in
sooth.” (292)

It is refreshing to note how Tiruvalluvar defines truth. It is not mere conformity to fact as it is very often said to be; it refers to speaking that which does not result in even the slightest taint of evil. As a consequence, even a false statement can be counted as truth if it brings in its train unmixed good. This instance shows how Valluvar is not an arm-chair moralist, but an eminently practical social philosopher who is concerned with common good.

3. The Bliss of Love

In the concluding third section, Valluvar deals with the moral conduct of man in relation to sex and love. Dr. Albert Schweitzer has observed. “In 250 maxims, earthly love is lauded. Later times, because they cause offence, interpret them allegorically as concerning the love of the soul to God.”

Later times have really no cause to suffer from any false sense of modesty, since Valluvar, who believes in correct conduct and right living, gives due importance to romantic love in his scheme of virtuous living.

His approach to romantic love is indeed very natural and psychological. One can discern the mental elevation of the enchanted lover, even at the start of his passionate love, when he exclaims:

“How great is the love between the body and the soul
Even so great is my love for this artless maid.” (1122)

While giving due place to physical sex, he does not equate it to love which, according to him, is a very delicate thing –

“Love is softer than flower and only a few
know its delicacy and are benefited” (1289)

8. In his book ‘Indian Thought and its Development.

With delightful touches, the poet (in the Kamatupal 3rd section) delineates love at first sight of two strangers, a matching man and a bewitching maid, who through providence are well set on their journey together in life. With a delicacy and restraint born of Tamil culture, Valluvar, without in any way impairing the intensity or the aesthetics of beauty, unfolds by stages the eternal drama of pure romance leading to a happy union. This idea is beautifully portrayed in the last couplet of the Kural, which perhaps by design ends up with the last letter of the Tamil alphabet.

“Sulking bestows true bliss to love
Bliss of bliss is embrace of lovers”

Concluding Remark

The very citations from Tirukkural, in this article, on *virtue*, *wealth* and *love* make it obvious that Valluvar offers us a life-affirming philosophy based on sound principles of ‘secular’ ethics, which is bound to bring happiness and peace to any society that opts for it. There is no hint of defeatism or escapism in his view of ethics. Valluvar’s philosophy leads one to accept life totally and live it fully.

A close study of 133 chapters of ten couplets each will doubtless disclose the poet’s portrait of a ‘perfect man’, a fulfilled man and a ‘happy man’ which is at once arresting and inspiring.

With the poet Bharatiyar we could therefore sing:

“The Tamilnadu had achieved high renown
By presenting Valluvar to the world.”

(Senthamizh – 7)

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Present World and Christian Hope

A Consideration of Rom. 8 : 18-30

In the Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* we read: "We do not know the time for the consummation of the earth and of humanity. Nor do we know how all things will be transformed. As deformed by sin, the shape of this world will pass away. But we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth where justice will abide, and whose blessedness will answer and surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart. Then, with death overcome, the sons of God will be raised up in Christ. What was sown in weakness and corruption will be clothed with incorruptibility. While charity and its fruits endure, all that creation which God made on man's account will be unchained from the bondage of vanity"¹. The Pauline inspiration of this passage is unmistakable. Of the ten Scripture allusions, seven refer to Paul's letters: 1 Cor. 7: 31; 2 Cor. 5: 2; 1 Cor. 2: 9; 1 Cor. 15: 42, 53; 1 Cor. 13: 8; 1 Cor. 3: 14; and Rom. 8: 19-21. The pericope in which the last of these references stands will be the basic text for this short study.

After having pointed out the different shades of meaning, some very negative, given to the term 'world' in the N. T., especially in the Pauline and Johannine writings John L. McKenzie concludes his article on the subject as follows: "It is important to grasp the true meaning of 'the world' in the N. T. in order that 'unworldliness' may not be mere narrowness and intolerance, or mere external distinction from other men in manners and customs. Christians, like Jesus, are in the world and have a mission to the world and overcome it eventually by love and only by love. To obtain the victory they must not identify themselves with the world as a power hostile to God, but neither can they lose their identity with the world as the creature of God, as the stage of the processes of salvation, and as unredeemed mankind"².

1. Vaticanum II, *Gaudium et spes*, nr. 39

2. *Dictionary of the Bible*, Milwaukee 1965, p. 944.

Reading Rom. 12: 1: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect", we might wonder why Paul does not enjoin "but transform this world". A double insight can be obtained by considering Paul's rather unexpected phrase "but be transformed" which continues the negative "do not be conformed to this world". (1) For Paul, this 'world' is not just God's good creation. The 'world' is seen here as alienated from God and hostile to God and Jesus Christ. (2) According to Paul true moral life, in the first place, is inward transformation; it is man-centered; man has to be renewed in his mind so that he can discern God's will.

In this study 'world' is taken in its neutral meaning. Our main questions here concerns the relation of the present world as God-given creation, to Christian hope. What is the continuity between our work in this world (production and culture) and our Christian hope in a future life? What is the future of this world? Instead of presenting a general exposition of the biblical view of the world, we prefer to examine one key text: Rom. 8: 18-30. Nevertheless, the questions just mentioned will be at the very centre of our treatment of this passage.

I. Structure and line of thought in Rom. 8: 18-30

Chapter eight concludes the second section of the central dogmatic part 1: 18-11: 36 of Paul's epistle to the Romans. That section, chapters 5-8, deals with the life of the Christian who is justified through faith in Christ.

1. The text unit

In chapter eight the verses 18-30 can be taken together. The beginning (v. 18) and the end (vv. 28-30) frame the passage.

V. 18: "I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us", is more than a transitional verse. The solemn manner of its formulation gives it the character of a thesis over against what follows. But do vv. 19-27 develop this thesis? In content, v. 18 clearly takes up motifs present at the end of the preced-

ing verse 17: "Provided we suffer with him (= Christ) in order that we may also be glorified with him". The main idea of v. 18 is that the Christian's actual sufferings and the coming glory are not comparable. Unless we were to say that the sufferings bear no comparison with the future splendour because they will be short and are a sign of the end (vv. 19-27) and because they work for good (v. 28). The main idea is not really developed in vv. 19-28. It is "the glory that is going to be revealed to us" which receives Paul's attention, more precisely, the awaiting of its revelation.

Vv. 28-30 have a certain independence. They depict God's abiding faithfulness. Yet, there are sufficient grounds for connecting these verses with the foregoing passage. The final verb of v. 30: "(He also) glorified", reminds us of the theme of glory present in vv. 18 and 21 (cf. also the end of v. 17). Moreover, the mention of 'Son' and 'brethren' clearly refer back to vv. 14-17 where 'Son' and 'sonship through possession of the Spirit' are central; all this is also the background of the whole pericope vv. 18-30. Finally, like vv. 17 and 18, v. 28 deals with the tribulations of the present life.

2. The four subsections of the unit

After v. 18 vv. 19-22 work out the following theme: Creation which is subject to futility, not by its own choice, and will be set free from the bondage of decay (vv. 20-21), waits with eager expectation for the glorious and manifest liberty of the children of God. The idea of intense expectation and aspiration is very much emphasized in both verses 19 and 22.

The second part, vv. 23-25, can be called 'the patient hope of the faithful'. Grammatically speaking, however, v. 23 is still somewhat dependent upon the "we know that", which introduces v. 22: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now, and not only (creation) but we also...". Moreover, vv. 24-25 present a brief excursus about what precisely 'hope' is. Notwithstanding this double unevenness, it is however possible to parallel several terms from both sections.

Compare:

vv. 23-25	with	vv. 19-22
23 we groan		22 the creation groans
23 redemption		21 will be set free
23 adoption as sons		21 the children of God
24 & 25 hope		20 in hope
25 we wait		19 the creation waits

In v. 26a it is said: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness". What is meant is the Spirit who dwells in us (cf. vv. 9-11, 12-16 and especially, v. 23: "we who have the first fruits, i.e. the Spirit"). Vv. 26b-27 explain in what the assistance consists; it is an interceding "with sighs too deep for words". What is it that the Spirit prays for? Probably we are allowed to refer back to vv. 19, 20 and answer: in order that the future splendour of the children of God may soon be manifest. Besides creation and us ourselves, there is thus a third entity which is 'groaning' ("likewise the Spirit", v. 26; cf. v. 23 and v. 22). His sighs, however, are different from ours. He helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us according to the will of God, whereas we do not know how to pray as we ought.

Vv. 28-30 no longer deal with the subjective waiting and groaning. On the basis of our insight into the faithfulness of God who foreknows, predestines, calls, justifies and glorifies, we know that the present sufferings will lead people who love God to glory: all things work for good.

II. Explanation

In Rom. 8:18-30 Paul is reasoning and putting forward all kinds of arguments. The particle *gar* (= for) abounds: see vv. 18, 19, 20, 22, 24c, 26b; the style is argumentative. Due attention should also be given to the 'definitions' in vv. 24-25 and to the 'chain' in the enumeration of vv. 29-30. Further, Paul thrice introduces a statement by means of a verb expressing conviction: "I consider" (v. 18), and twice "we know" (vv. 22 and 28). The vocabulary and representations, especially in vv. 18-23, have an apocalyptic quality; see e.g. the expressions: this present time, future glory, revelation and cosmic groanings.... A second reading of the text may be useful in order to present some exegetical notes.

In v. 18 the phrase "this present time" does not seem to point to the whole present aeon; it probably means the "period of time which began with the gospel events and will be terminated by the Parousia".³ It can be said that Christians already possess the glory, a glory that has still to be revealed. The 'revelation of the sons of God' should be thought of as a kind of manifestation and presentation to all creation. By 'creation' in vv. 19-22 Paul probably means all the created reality of this world: matter, plants, animals, excluding man. Paul personifies this creation. 'Vanity' in v. 20 is senseless, powerless and void existence. Vanity is different from 'decay' in v. 21, which term points to dissolution and death and is opposed to immortality and glory. It may be preferable to take God (not Satan or Adam) as the subject of the verb 'to subject' in v. 20. Because of God's punitive decision the whole creation participates in man's situation after the Fall. Creation itself, however, did not sin. Its position now is an unnatural one; creation waits for liberation, but this liberation cannot be obtained apart from man's freedom. Thus, this time too, creation will participate; creation is not subsistent.

In v. 23 much emphasis is laid on 'we': "not only (creation) but we ourselves also . . . we ourselves also are groaning". 'Redemption of the body' is not liberation of the soul from the body; no, the whole human person has to be redeemed from corruption⁴. In v. 24 the term 'hope' occurs three times. Whereas

3. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Intern. Crit. Comm.), Edinburgh 1975, p. 409.

4. It is somewhat strange that in v. 23 'the adoption as sons' lies still in the future, whereas in v. 15 Paul presents it as an already present condition. We are adoptive sons of God and, yet, we wait for this adoption. Western witnesses, therefore, omit the word in v. 23 and some exegetes prefer this reading. "... l'acte de notre adoption dans le Christ ne saurait être l'objet d'une attente anxieuse de la part des chrétiens... Dès l'instant qu'ils ont été régénérés dans le Christ et qu'ils ont reçu son Esprit, comme Paul le redit dans le v. 23 lui-même..., ils sont des fils et il ne peut être question pour eux de désirer avec des soupirs un geste divin dont ils ont bénéficié au moment du baptême et qui n'est pas à renouveler, car il les a placés dans une condition nouvelle et de soi définitive" (P. Benoit, "Nous gémissons attendant la délivrance de notre corps" (Rom. 8, 23)," in *Recherches Science Relig.* 39 (1951-52) 267-280, p. 275). It would seem that Benoit here opposes the 'already' and 'not yet' in too logical a way.

in v. 24 hope itself is meant, in v. 24b the term indicates the object of hope, that which is hoped for. The affirmation of v. 25b, "through patience we eagerly expect" undoubtedly contains a hidden exhortation.

Vv. 26-27 are not easy to understand. In the verb 'to help' (*sunantilambanomai*) the preposition *sun* does not mean "together with (us)" but merely corroborates the idea of support expressed by the compound verb. The expression "according to what is necessary" in v. 26 has to be interpreted by means of the explicit "according to God" of v. 27. In the same verse God is certainly the one who "searches the hearts."⁵ He also knows the mind of the Spirit present in the Christians. The Spirit pleads "with sighs too deep for words". Probably Paul has in mind here sighs which, inward as they are, cannot be heard or perceived by Christians.⁶

It is possible that in vv. 29-30 Paul is using and expanding a pre-Pauline text. These verses, the famous *catena aurea*, introduced by the motivating *hoti* (= because), have to prove the thesis of v. 28: all things, sufferings included, work for the good of those who love God, those who are called according to his purpose. In vv. 29-30 five phases are distinguished:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) those whom He foreknew | (2) He also predestined; |
| (2) those whom He predestined | (3) He also called; |
| (3) those whom He called | (4) He also justified; |
| (4) those whom He justified | (5) He also glorified. |

'Glorified' is a prophetic aorist by means of which the certainty as to the outcome of one's expectation is underlined. All these predestination clauses point to the Christian's faith conviction. What God once started for our salvation, He will certainly bring to an end. We should perhaps take the genitive "of his Son"

5. Cf. e.g. 1 Sam. 16: 7; 1 Kg. 8: 39; Ps. 7: 10; Pr. 15: 11; Jer. 17: 9-10.

6. Some exegetes think here of 'glossolalia' and understand the term 'unspoken' in the sense of unarticulate sounds. Others - but this too is hardly correct - are of the opinion that Paul points to what happens in heaven where the Spirit intercedes for the Saints. For a recent study of this verse see A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Romans 8. 26 - Towards a theology of Glossolalia?" in *Scott. Journ. Theol.* 28 (1975) 369-377.

(v. 29) as a genitive of apposition⁷: "to be conformed to the image of his Son", i.e. to God's image which his Son is!

III. The Future of the World

"If we are children, then also heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may be also glorified with him" (v. 17). V. 18 takes up the reference to suffering: There is, Paul says, no comparison between present suffering and future glory. Why? As the groaning of the whole creation as well as of Christians and the Spirit within them indicates, this future glory is very near in time (vv. 19-27); moreover, with those who love God everything, suffering also, works in a positive way for good: it furthers their salvation (v. 28). This is Paul's message to Christians who suffer in this world.

In this third paragraph our attention is directed to the so-called cosmic dimension of salvation as this seems to be pointed to in vv. 19-21. Four questions may be raised. (1) How was Paul brought to ascribe to (subhuman) creation such human desires and aspirations? (2) How does Paul see the relationship 'creation-man (child of God)' and, in more philosophical terms, that of 'matter-spirit'? (3) Even if, as we have assumed, there is not a complete identity between 'vanity, futility' in v. 20 and 'decay, corruption' in v. 21, it is clearly Paul's opinion that, because of Adam's sin, creation has been fixated in an unnatural situation. What are the implications of such a thesis for Christian thinking? (4) Paul seems to expect a liberation of the universe. Is there continuity between this time and the age to come and, in particular, can it be stated that our working for a better world now has an abiding and thus eschatological significance, not only for our personal salvation but also for the world itself?

1. Personification

It has already been that in vv. 19-22 Paul personifies creation in that he attributes human longings to nature. The question remains, however, as to how Paul himself looked at this way of speaking. Two remarks are in order here. The possibility

7. Cf. F. Blass - A. Debrunner - R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, Chicago-London 1961, nr. 167.

not to be excluded that from out of a time-bound mentality Paul considers nature as living and animated. Further, one would like to know to what kind of insights Paul refers in vv. 19-22. Does his knowledge originate solely from contemporary speculations on such O.T. passages as Gen. 3: 17-19; "Accursed shall be the ground...."? Or does he (also) have in mind certain concrete data, some manifestations in nature, which everybody can observe? Definite answers to questions of this sort can hardly be expected.

2. The liberation of the created universe

According to Paul redemption does not involve the destruction of body and matter. This conviction, strikingly similar to certain modern cosmological and anthropological insights, is in radical disagreement with the basic belief of many Greeks and of the Gnostics. Christians expect the resurrection and transformation of the body, whatever be the way this glorifying renewal is to be conceived. Further, according to Paul, there is a future, not only for the body but also for the whole created universe. The world will participate in the splendour of the children of God. Paul thus believes in a future and a new, changed universe⁸.

8. Although we must bear in mind that in Rom 8: 18-30 Paul, in the first place, is certainly thinking of "die Situation der noch leidensbedrängten Christen", can it be affirmed that he does not also intend to inform us "Über das Schicksal der Schöpfung in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft"? This is the position of A. Vögtle, "Röm 8, 19-22: eine schöpfungstheologische oder anthropologisch-soteriologische Aussage?" *Melanges Bibliques en hommage au R. P. B. Rigaux* (ed. A. Descamps; A. de Halleux), Gembloux 1970, pp. 351-366, p. 365. He concludes: "Röm 8, 18-22 will höchstwahrscheinlich nicht als schöpfungstheologische sondern als anthropologische Aussage verstanden worden" (p. 366). This last sentence is omitted in the reprint of this article in Vögtle, *Das Neue Testament und die Zukunft des Kosmos* (Komment. u. Beitr. A. N. T.), Dusseldorf 1970, pp. 183-208. Cf., in the same line, H. Schwantes, *Schöpfung Endzeit* (Arbeiten zur Theologie I, 12), Stuttgart 1963. See also H. R. Balz, *Heilsv Vertrauen und Welterfahrung. Strukturen der paulinischen Eschatologie nach Römer 8. 18-39* (Beitr. Evang. Theol. 59), München 1971.

3. Creation without sin

One can hardly suppose that in Romans Paul is reflecting upon the question what the situation of the world of matter, plants and animals would have been without Adam's sin. Neither should we assume that Paul has meditated much upon what precisely sin has caused in creation. Phrases such as "subjection to vanity" and "slavery to decay" must, rather, be taken as expressing Paul's profound conviction that creation was deeply affected by the sin of the first man. One cannot deny, however, that Paul, together with all Jews for whom Gen. 3: 17-19 is Holy Scripture, believed that through that sin man and nature alike were punished with death, corruption and suffering, phenomena of which it is nowadays rightly said that they would have been present even without Adam's sin. Any attempt, therefore, to harmonize Rom. 8: 19-22 with the findings of modern natural science must be rejected.

4. Continuity?

The last question is a very delicate one. Already as far as man alone is concerned, there is something paradoxical in our faith. During his lifetime on earth the Christian has to work for his salvation, with soul and body. The resurrection of the body is hoped for. Yet, there is not only illness and desintegration of this body, also the assurance that precisely in suffering and death real life comes to its fullness. "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor. 4: 16-17). What then is the situation with regard to the rest of God's creation, this present world? Can anything more be suggested here than a warning against possible misconceptions?

It would be wrong, indeed, to ascribe to the universe a subsistent significance of its own, apart from man. All creation is for man. In solidarity with man it is condemned and redeemed; its past and future are linked with man's destiny. No other glorification of the world is to be expected than that of man in

Christ. "Without redemption of man, there cannot be redemption of the body, nor, consequently, redemption of the universe"⁹.

The future glorification of the world thus cannot be the result of man's efforts alone. The final condition of the universe will not be brought about by a process of innerworldly evolution or by an increasing mastering of creation by man. Who speaks of redemption means the event of the Cross, i. e. God's initiative in Christ¹⁰. The above paradox applies not only to man (the Christian's suffering and death) but, in an analogous way, to the universe in which man lives.

While the idea of a naive continuity has thus to be discarded, a radical discontinuity and, therefore, neglect or disregard of creation, and complete unwordliness, would be equally wrong. Just as the future glory of the risen body is totally God's gift but, at the same time, a human achievement which is wrought out in a bodily existence, so the new world will be the world to which God gives the glory of his children, but certainly also the world which during the course of history has been used and changed, transformed and perfected, by the labour and ingenuity of those who live in it. "From the fact that the redemption of the body extends to the entire Universe it follows that human labour – man's efforts to master the material universe, to tear away its secrets, to tame it, to utilize it, to transform brute matter into ever more perfected instruments, right up to those 'electric brains' capable of operations which defy even the intelligence of man who made them – all this human labour takes on an eternal value".¹¹

9. S. Lyonnet, "La redemption de l'Univers," in *Lumière et Vie*, nr. 48 (1960) 43–62 p. 61.

10. H. Schlier, "Das worauf alles wartet. Eine Auslegung von Röm. 8, 18–30," in *Interpretation der Welt. Festschrift für R. Guardini*, Würzburg 1965, pp. 599–616, warns against "Weltoffenheit, die allzu leicht Weltakkomodation wird" (p. 605). Cf. Rom. 12: 1–2.

11. Lyonnet, *a. c.*, p. 60.

Thus, "while we are warned that it profits a man nothing if he gain the whole world and lose himself, the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age. Earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom. Nevertheless, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the kingdom of God. For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in His Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured. This will be so when Christ hands over to the Father a kingdom eternal and universal: a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love, and peace. On this earth that kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns, it will be brought into full flower".¹²

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12. *Gaudium et spes*, nr. 39.

Liberty of the Person in Society

Liberty and freedom are complementary terms, the former standing for the absence of external restraints and the latter signifying the internal capability to direct oneself. Liberty cannot be taken in a purely negative sense but implies all the positive conditions required for the human person to be fully adjusted, happy and creative in the community of persons, and hence also the different dimensions of freedom. To understand the liberty of the human person in society it is not enough to make a purely theoretical analysis of person and society. One has to take seriously into consideration several sociological factors that constitute the complex existential reality of the person in actual society, like his psychological needs the concrete cultural requirements, the political consequences, real conditions of life and especially the normative factors that distinguish between freedom and slavery. The requirements of a person's liberty in society are briefly explained now in terms of these main headings.

Psychological liberty

Liberty is first of all a psychological reality decided according as how a person feels in relationship with other persons in community, whether he finds himself and equal to his fellow human beings in a mutual free give-and-take or restrained and thwarted in his communion with others. Even in the most restraining prison and under the most ruthless persecution a courageous person can retain his inner freedom and feel spiritually unaffected by all the external restrictions imposed on him. All the same his condition cannot be termed liberty. Man, constituted of body and soul, matter and spirit, needs certain basic requisites in order to enjoy liberty. Liberty is the condition of the "liberi"—the children of the family. It demands sufficient provision of food and clothing and other material requisites and spiritual opportunities so that one may appear a worthy member of the

family of man. Beyond these requisites that constitute an atmosphere of essential freedom there is the spiritual condition of the person himself who is capable of deciding his own destiny. A person is a conscious subject who, in a certain sense, possesses himself and can dispose of himself in view of his final goal and ultimate meaning. This means the freedom of choice. The more opportunities to decide for oneself what one wants to do and achieve, the greater his liberty. A prison where the inmates have all the major decisions made for them by the authorities and relatively very few decisions to make for themselves is a clear example of lack of liberty, in spite of the abundant food, sufficient clothing and other requisites supplied by the outside agency. A proper awareness of the variety of motives for which one makes the choice, and the capacity to choose among them, form another aspect of this psychological liberty. Lack of proper education, cultural development and spiritual formation can curtail to a great extent, this possibility of personal choice. Only in an atmosphere in which all one's material needs are sufficiently taken care of, and both internal and external conflicts prevented, can one attain the highest expression of spiritual freedom in going beyond all conceivable particular motivations and surrendering oneself to the unknown and unknowable Absolute as exemplified in mystical experience and aesthetic inspiration.

This psychological freedom is the goal of liberty in society. Society is not an end in itself but is the communion of persons, and its function is to create the atmosphere in which persons can be more authentically themselves, more in charge of their own destiny and free from the caprice of circumstances and the selfish manoeuvres of other people.

Liberty on the cultural plane

Another factor that affects the liberty of a person in society is culture itself, which divides people into cultured and uncultured, and determines several levels of culture itself. Culture is the development of man and of his faculties and possibilities and consists of several subtle elements like the refinement of language, cleanliness, and aesthetic taste in dress and manners, and the great many details of refined behaviour which are supposed to be external

expressions of higher spiritual values like modesty concerning one's own accomplishments, awareness of one's limitations, concern for the happiness and welfare of others and sincere love for them. But the problem of these external expressions of internal culture is that they tend to become stereotyped and easily monopolized by classes possessing wealth and influence even without the internal values they stand for. Instead of freeing persons for spontaneous communion with each other these rubrics of correct behaviour imprison them behind impregnable masks. Genuine human values entertained by all men, even those labelled uncultured, do not find expression in them.

This slavery of culture is particularly apparent in the educational system. Education, especially higher education, provides with proficiency in language and competence in specialized areas of the arts, science and technology and other refinements which constitute culture. But the chances of getting into schools of higher learning are so heavily weighted in favour of the children of the wealthy, and of those who hold high positions of power and influence, that the children of the poor and under-privileged sections of society are as a whole effectively prevented from improving their cultural liberty. According to recent surveys even in the developed countries the objective probability of a son of business executive's going to college is forty times that of the son of a factory worker. The program of education, requirements for graduation and the methods of education are all in conformity with the cultural level of the higher sections of society. In the name of maintaining an objective standard the academic institutions ignore the de facto cultural inequalities of its students in the content of the instruction given, the methods and techniques of imparting knowledge and especially in valuation. To achieve the liberation of the masses a certain political democratization of educational institutions is absolutely necessary. Rather than insisting on conformity to certain preconceived modes of cultural refinement the specific functions a particular individual to fulfil in the service of the community must be borne in mind. This will not mean lowering of educational standards since what is primarily considered is not an object produced but a function to be performed.

The political aspect of liberty

In its external aspect liberty is a political reality and is generally symbolized by items like universal suffrage, equality of all before the law and equality of economic opportunity. Here again true liberty of the people is imperceptibly eroded by the dynamics of the political machinery. The political institution comes into being out of the need to liberate the people from poverty, exploitation and oppression. But more dependent the people become on the political institution for the satisfaction of its need, the more does the system dominate and control the different aspects of the life of those who submit to it. Real liberty consists in thinking independently and critically of the institutions set up by man. But this independent and critical thinking becomes difficult not only under a repressive regime, against which one spontaneously rebels, but also under a benevolent, democratic welfare state in which the means of production as well as the mass media are controlled by vested interests. Unless the people are constantly vigilant the very institutions that they build for their liberation may end up by enslaving them more thoroughly. This phenomenon is particularly apparent in mass media which, by creating an artificial need for the products through paid commercials, provide the same media with resources to produce, in the general public, through their high-rated programmes, a morally lax mentality that encourages the break-up of families, legitimizes abortion and tolerates crime in the name of freedom. Of course, the political system and the mass media have an internal consistency and moral code of their own that fight against the existing inequities like out-dated traditions and stereotyped inequalities of the sexes and classes. But these political institutions and communications media embrace only certain aspects of human life and hence when, on the one hand, they liberate people from certain disabilities, they are myopic, on the other hand, concerning certain other aspects of human slavery, and cannot, therefore, be agents of man's total liberty. The free society cannot be defined purely in terms of the traditional concepts of economic, political and intellectual liberty because these terms also imply, by themselves slavery: economic liberty implies also the domination of one group by another, political liberty the domination of one party over another, and intellectual freedom the imposition of ideas and attitudes through

commercial means. Hence true liberty means absence of economic exploitation, political domination and manipulation of human thinking by interested parties. Thus economic liberty is the freedom from the daily struggle for existence, and the control of economic forces and relationship, and the assurance of a reasonable satisfaction of material needs. The human spirit reached the highest points of spiritual insight not in abject poverty nor in material affluence but in a situation of modest economic self-sufficiency in which there was freedom from worry about the next meal. Political liberty is the general feeling that the state is not an absolute entity existing for its own sake, but the common enterprise of all to provide what a lower unit of society cannot provide by itself. Intellectual liberty will consist in the restoration of individual thought and individual conscience now absorbed by "public opinion" controlled by its manipulators.

A special instance of the loss of political liberty is found in what are designated total institutions. These institutions which control more or less every phase and aspect of the life of its members sometimes come of necessity to take care of people who are incapable of taking care of themselves, like the blind, the old, the orphans etc., or people who represent a danger to the rest of the people, involuntarily like T. B. patients and lepers in clinics and asylums or intentionally like criminals in prisons. But even these institutions can benefit their inmates more to the extent that they cease to be total and try to help them help themselves. What may really infringe upon the liberty of healthy persons in society are those institutions which people embrace voluntarily either for a specific activity, like those represented by military barracks, ships, colleges and labour camps, or for a specific form of life removed from the world, like monasteries and convents. The threat to liberty comes from the fact that these institutions tend to overstep their specific goals and encroach upon the personal life of their members. One of the fundamental aspects of modern society is that man tends to work, play and live with different companions. But in total institution all these activities are carried on in the same place, through direct contact with the same huge group of persons, and the different phases of the daily activities are rigorously controlled by a system of formal explicit rules. In such a situation, with very little opportunity left for personal decision, the members

can lose the substance of liberty and become frustrated and alienated, and the community easily divides into opposing groups. The directorial staff in contact with the outside world, with responsibility for all decisions, enjoy all freedom and the ordinary members with very little freedom, become mutually distrustful and alienated. Only by conscientiously maintaining an active role of the affected persons in every decision and activity, and giving responsibility as wide as possible among the members, may the helpful role of these institutions be maintained without loss of liberty.

Liberty in the actual realities of life

But liberty is not a mere idea or ideal, and hence its reality cannot be exhaustively reduced to abstract categories. Even in a free society individuals may be found best with a great variety of conditions that rob them of all real liberty. Even persons enjoying dictatorial authority in all too submissive society may be prisoners of the systems they maintain, constantly fearing loss of their power and suspicious of those who uphold their authority. Sickness, poverty, social disapprobation and a host of other forces, can rob a person of liberty in society. With many liberty is a very relative thing. There are persons and groups with minimum needs and expectations who find full liberty in an apparently restrictive system. The tribal societies with their centuries-old tradition of authoritarian rule by their chiefs may feel perfectly at home with conditions that members of another society may find intolerable. Consequently no two systems of social liberty may be compared on a one-to-one basis since similar social factors have different values in different systems. Hence any social set-up should be taken as a whole and evaluated in terms of its effect on its members.

Liberty as a social norm

Today liberty is one of the highest values in human life and a directive moral norm for man's action since even salvation is conceived liberation. But this normative aspect of liberty is conceived differently in different system. Modern Western ideology places the emphasis on the individual human being and his relation to objects and not on society which is assured of evolution

through competition of forces, natural selection and the survival of the fittest. True liberty, therefore, presents the vision of a happy and free human being in a righteous society reconciling the various coordinates of a closed and self-sufficient system. These coordinates include among others human corporeity, nature and ecological environment, and the human realized in the space-time structure, and the social and institutional structures. Their harmony must be achieved in practice and consciously realized through theoretical interpretation. Religious faith and spiritual salvation form the utopian moment envisioned in a better future of man's perfect liberty. Hence every other aspect and factor of liberty point and lead up to that total liberation as an ultimate value.

The Biblical view of human liberty, rooted in the Hebrew thought pattern and divine Revelation, sees it as the true condition of God's children, who are obedient to his laws and in constant communion with him. Here again the emphasis is on the individual, though in interaction with other persons in the community of the chosen people.

Eastern thought, especially that of India, has in defining liberty placed the emphasis on the common reality of all men grounded in the one eternal Self, of which individuals are merely particular expressions. Hence liberty is not matter of competing forces but of greater self-authenticity in harmony with one's own ground. Priests and kings are not two competing powers like two swords but complementary functions like husband and wife in the family. Categories like gods and men, Brahmins and Kshatriyas, kings and subjects, are not absolute but relative, ranked not through possessions but through generosity according to what each one can contribute to make society an appropriate manifestation of the divine reality. Hence liberty is law, the link between the absolute and phenomenal aspects of reality, and law is truth.

These three perspectives on the normative aspect of liberty are evidently complementary. The interpersonal aspect of liberty emphasized by Biblical thought has evidently to be grounded in the law of God, on the one hand, and on the other, to be expressed in the harmony of the coordinates of everyday life.

Book Reviews

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias of Indian Thought

St. Elmo Nauman, Jr. *Dictionary of Asian Philosophies*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1978. pp. xxi 372, \$ 20.

Margaret and James Stutley. *Harper's Dictionary of Hinduism, Its Mythology, Folklore, Philosophy, Literature and History*, New York: Harper & Row, 1977, pp. xx 772, \$ 30. 00

Jose Pereira (ed). *Hindu Theology: A Reader*: New York: Doubleday, Image Book, 1976, pp. 558, \$ 3. 50

Karl H. Potter (ed.) *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology. The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gangesa*. Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977, pp. xiii 744.

Raimundo Panikkar. *The Vedic Experience. Mantramanjari*. An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977. pp. xxxviii 937. £ 20.

The strange fascination Eastern religions and philosophies held for the Western youth in the late sixties and early seventies has almost disappeared today. But the great projects started by scholars to cater to the great demand in a serious way are reaching completion only now and a number of encyclopedic works are coming out from those projects. These may be considered the lasting results of a passing fad and they cannot but continue to influence Western thought for the future. The five works taken for review here are typical of the different Western efforts to understand the East.

Dictionary of Asian Philosophies by St. Elmo Nauman Jr is a handy reference book for the layman to provide sufficient information on most of the prominent Asian thinkers, philosophical and religious traditions, systems and concepts. From Abhidharma to Zoroastrianism it provides brief descriptions of the problems discussed and the solutions proposed in the various

areas of religious and philosophical thought. The major religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are described. One wonders why Islam and Christianity are left out. Though some Hebrew thinkers like Hillel, Akiba and Sham-mai and Islamic scholars like Al Kindi, Avicenna and Al Farabi are discussed great names like Maimonides and Suhrawardi are significantly absent. According to the author Plato and all who came to be influenced by his thought are Western and Asian thought is dominated by the Upanishads and great thinkers like Zoroaster, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Confucius and Sankara. But it is difficult to understand why the author takes Christian thought as completely Western and leaves out the ancient Christian scholars of Asia.

Nauman notes correctly that Eastern thought cannot be forced into one single unified theme. It covers five major cultures, Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, Persian and Japanese. India provided the great universal formulations, China the great classics on social theory, Tibet mystic meditation and Japan the application of the mystical perspective to ordinary life. In view of its limited scope of providing basic information to the uninitiated this is a useful manual. Its merit is that it is mostly descriptive and not evaluative, and it does not kill the interest of the inquisitive mind for seeking further.

Harper's Dictionary of Hinduism by Margaret and James Stutley is of a totally different calibre. Fruit of twenty years of study and research it is written to meet the needs and stricter norms of the educated reader and the scholar. It is restricted to Hinduism among Asian religions, but covers a wide range of topics like mythology, folklore, ritual, literature, history and philosophy. It is supported by a wealth of material from the past studies of famous indologists and provides reliable information concerning etymology of religious terms, different aspects of religious symbols, historical evolution of customs and traditions. Western indologists in the past have concentrated almost exclusively on Hindu and Buddhist literature, Sanskrit grammar, and religious cult, customs and traditions and very rarely engaged in an examination of the tradition from within through an earnest study of its thought patterns and philosophies. That onesided emphasis of Western scholarship is reflected in this dictionary

also. Though philosophy is listed as one of the main areas, the Dictionary is weakest in dealing with philosophical concepts, issues and systems, which are in fact, the strongest strand of Hindu tradition. It is rather strange that scholars who can report so much about a nation's medicine, dance, sacrifice, priests and gods have very little to say about its conception of reality, causality, being, consciousness, non-existence and other philosophical ideas. But this general weakness of Western scholarship in general regarding indology does not detract from the usefulness of the dictionary as far as its main objectives are concerned.

Hindu Theology: A Reader, compiled and edited with notes by Jose Pereira, is a collection of Hindu Sanskrit religious writings principally of the second millennium A. D. translated into English for the benefit of Western theologians. As the editor acknowledges the translation is not technical or "intensive" but mainly aimed at making the ideas in the Sanskrit text attain a new avatar in English. The selection and arrangement of the texts is dominated by the editor's particular theory concerning the relation between Eastern and Western traditions set forth in a first part titled "An Overview of Hindu Theology". The general thesis is that these Hindu texts contain the same religious ideas and insights that today confront and challenge traditional theology in the West. The only difference is that they were proposed by the Hindu thinkers long ago so that the Western thinkers who brought out the same ideas recently cannot claim much originality for them. The author mentions some thirteen specific points on which Eastern insights antedated the Western discoveries. Thus the Copernican Revolution of the 17th century West was simply supplanting the Greek ideas by the insight the Indian thinkers had long ago about the immensity of time and space. 19th century Idealism of Europe was formulated in India some sixteen centuries earlier by Asanga and Vasubandhu. Materialism that exercised great influence in 19th century Europe was a system of thought developed in India in the 9th century B. C. long before even the Greek Democritus thought about it. Greek Scepticism of Pyrrho and Carneades was borrowed from India probably during Alexander's invasion of the country. The non-soul doctrine of Hume was the original insight of Buddhists, who outdid even Kant in the elimination of the thing-in-itself as knowable. In the theory of reality as flux Buddha preceded

Heraclitus and Kamalasila of 7th century A. D, preceded Rousseau who came only in the 17th century. But the Indians lacked an insight into the theory of creation out of nothing, which could come only from the concept of the analogy of being proposed by Aristotle. Pereira reduces all other theories about the relationship between God and world of finite beings into three basic types of theology, one affirms real difference between God and the world, the second affirms identity and the third identity in difference. The selected texts are arranged in this order.

It is rather difficult to determine the positive value of Pereira's "overview" and the merits of his arrangement of the texts. The Hindu thinkers evidently had more than three patterns of God-world relation and much more than the God-world relation in mind in the heated discussions among various schools. More evidence is surely needed to establish that Buddha, Asanga, Vasubandhu and other Indian thinkers said exactly the same thing as Kant, Berkeley, Hume and other recent philosophers of the West. In view of the vastly different historical, sociological and philosophical contexts that separate the two groups and the divergent scopes they had in view a clear suspicion is created in the mind of the reader that the author has misunderstood either one or the other or probably even both. Perhaps it can be taken as a taunt to the Western student to go to the sources and find out for himself the truth or otherwise of the claims. But even if the thesis were granted the question can be raised why one should bother with these ancient texts taken out of their context when the same insights can be gained from Western thinkers closer to our context and more familiar with our problems. It would have been more useful if the compiler provided us with more about the historical context of each author and the actual problems he was trying to resolve. The intricate diagrams at the end of the book comparing East and West are an interesting feature of the book. Obviously the texts which speak for themselves go beyond the limited framework of the editor.

Karl H. Potter's *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, subtitled *Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology (The Tradition of Nyaya-Vaisesika up to Gangesa)* presents in summary some 30 works of the Nyaya-Vaisesika school before 1350 when under the leadership of Gangesa the Navyanyaya or "New Logic" supplan-

ted the old. Potter is one of the few Western scholars who have appreciated the philosophical side of Indian thought and endeavoured to bring it to the notice of the West. His *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (1963) and *Bibliography of Indian Philosophies* (1970) are earlier contributions in this line. He has secured the help of several Indian scholars like B. K. Matilal and V. Varadachari in summarising the different works. Besides summarising several works himself the editor gives also a 208 page introduction summarising the Nyaya-Vaisesika philosophy. As he states in the preface the work is the fruit of over fifteen years of study and collaboration with other scholars.

Nyaya-Vaisesika, which is actually two schools with a unified philosophical outlook, is a philosophical system that is, on the one hand, closest to common sense, making "all truth claims about things within reach of the senses turn ultimately on direct observation", and at the same time, also the most imaginative of systematic philosophies, according to Potter. Any philosophical system endeavours to study accurately and adequately what is relevant to human concerns leaving out all that is irrelevant or superfluous. In this respect Indian philosophies in general and Nyaya Vaisesika in particular have the same systematic and rational concerns of the West, since the scientific attitudes are rooted in the subject-predicate pattern, syntax and inner logic of Indo-European languages. The main importance of the Nyaya-Vaisesika school is its realism, and the vigour with which it counters the idealistic arguments of Buddhism, the same idealistic critique of substance initiated in the West in recent times by Berkeley. The old Nyaya-Vaisesika thinkers groped for a system in which every term would be carefully defined, and each whether subject or predicate and even logical connectives like "and", "or", and "not" has a referent. They did not distinguish logical terms from others: to them "is" denotes positive being, "not" negative being, i. e. absence, "and" and "or" denote certain complex relations. Theirs was an "extensional" system, which did not allow difference of entity without difference of content, and so admitted even repeatable entities like universals. In their main metaphysical scope of attaining the final goal of man through the understanding of reality, they endeavoured to arrive at its non-divisible or atomic components of which they numbered over forty like substance, action, relation, colour, taste, sound and

smell, including even space, time and inherence. According to Potter a prime purpose of this philosophy is "the successful analysis of the make up of these things, so that the aspirant for liberation may truly understand the sources of attraction and be able to adopt a suitably disinterested attitude towards them" (p. 47). Hence relation, including inherence, contact, causality and selflinking connectors, was one of the most important meta-physical categories for them. The school ascribes special meta-physical importance also to *abhāva* or absence, which is the counterpositive of every positive entity.

The value of Indian philosophy is not merely that it has anticipated a great number of modern questions in the West, but rather that it had a different perspective on them and presented a different method in resolving them. This volume is an objective presentation of Indian philosophical thinking very valuable for the undergraduate student. The graduate student and the scholar will evidently go to the Sanskrit sources themselves. The analytical index at the end of the book is a great help in locating the discussion of particular topics in the different books, since the Indian system of commenting upon only the difficult aphorisms of the school leaving out the rest as generally understood presents many gaps in the logical development of themes.

The Vedic Experience, Mantramanjari, which is an anthology of texts from the Vedas, Brahmanas and Upanishads translated and edited by Raimundo Panikkar, seeks to go beyond philosophical systems and schools. Its objective as stated in the introduction is "presenting the Vedas as a human experience that is still valid and capable of enriching and challenging modern Man". Experience as such cannot be transmitted but only described and hence we are not in a position to appropriate directly the intimate experience of the ancient Vedic people. All that is possible may be to describe what modern man may usefully understand and assimilate "by reenacting an experience that, because it is part of the total human experience, has left behind it clues and traces which may be important to follow" (p. 4). Though not all the texts of the Vedas are *mantras* Panikkar has chosen the term for the title of the book in order to avoid the terms like *Veda* and *Sruti* restricted to the particular tradition. The selections are intended

to put the Western man in direct contact with the text of the Veda, which known only through secondary sources has already exerted great influence on the Western mind. Panikkar sees an analogy with the condition of the Bible in Catholic circles some time ago, when the text of the Bible though central to the spirituality of Christians was directly inaccessible to the ordinary people. The criterion of selection is what Panikkar calls non-sectarian, universal, springing from simple human experience, a "pattern that seems to be built into the very core of being itself, the preparation before a given community comes into the fullness of life, then growth and decay, and the final continuation and survival of the particular group", though most cultures and peoples are not conscious of this development. For a long time the Vedas were inaccessible to the ordinary followers of Hinduism; it was forbidden to translate them or teach them to the non-initiated. But modern man in every tradition abhors artificial esoterisms and sectarian separations. Hence the Vedas which arose in the intimate experience of people should be located in the experience of the modern man.

But translation itself always implies a certain amount of emigration from the original meaning and symbolism, especially if the original symbolism is dead. The extremes, however, of anachronistic and "katachronic" interpretations that make use of obsolete or inadequate contemporary notions should be avoided and Panikkar claims for his translation faithfulness to the original without being literal. He wants it to be taken not as a "translation, but as a representation, an existential reenactment".

Panikkar states that his anthology "is not a book on Indian philosophy or even Hindu spirituality, and much less a typical work of Indology". But it has to be all these at the same time, though its emphasis is on the relevance of the Vedic experience for the contemporary man. One may even question how the author can pretend to leap to the Vedic lore without any recourse to Brahmanism or the living religious tradition of Hinduism and claim to rescue sruti from the pundits, indologists and the living religion itself. What is termed as fidelity solely to the experience of the modern man may sound like the existentialistic approach to the Christ of faith by passing the Jesus of history. If we examine the different phases through which the "modern

experience" in the West zigzagged in the late sixties and in the early seventies, it will appear a very unreliable guide. If we care only for "modern experience" why should we bother about these ancient texts of whose origin and original context of experience we know precious little? The only reliable means for arriving at the authentic meaning of those texts even for the modern man is their objective study through the available scientific tools and observation of their impact in the living religious tradition that claims allegiance to and inspiration from those texts. What is being stressed by Panikkar is that sometimes religious traditions can lose their link with the past and end up as narrow sectarianism, and that scholars can sometimes become prisoners of their own scientific tools. But the only way to find out if this has really happened is through the authentic religious sense within the tradition, and through the proper use of scientific methodology, and not by discarding them in favour of an extraneous modern experience. As Prof. P. Ashby maintains in his *Modern Trends in Hinduism* the vitality of Asian religions today demonstrates that nobody has to bring value systems for them from the outside; they have in them enough consciousness of their mission to provide inspiration for the millions that follow them. The crisis of modernity brought about especially by the Western impact has only strengthened their leadership.

A second paradox of *Mantramanjari* is the very order in which the selections has been arranged. It follows the sequence of preparation, germination and growth, blossoming and fullness, fall and decay, death and dissolution, new life and freedom. Yet Panikkar admits that most peoples and cultures live their lives without any self-reflection on these stages. This concern for the origins, teleological development and eschatological fulfilment and survival may be typical of the post-exilic Hebrew thought and rational Greek philosophy and does not seem to agree with the actual experience of the Vedic man confronted with the forces of nature, at the same time threatening and benevolent and trying to deal with them through myth and symbolism, sacrificial ritual and moral self discipline. Still, this scientific model can help one understand what is implicit even in the experience of ancient peoples.

In spite of a free use of Western terms like God, revelation, lord, and salvation to make the meaning of texts clear to

the Western reader the translation succeeds in bringing out the unique insights of the Vedic sages. Though some passages on first reading may sound as if taken directly from the Bible, on closer examination it will appear that they have different perspective on the life and concerns of man. Preoccupation with the modern secular man and the anxiety to create a global culture do not characterise the genius of the Vedic thought. It transcends the dichotomy of subject and object, and in it man appears in his self-experience as the microcosm that mirrors the total reality. The prayer of the Vedic man is not of a suppliant appealing to a remote power but rather an act that embraces all in one, the Divine, the Human and the cosmic. In this effort to reach reality beyond thought and speech the ancient seers "make the staggering claim of entering into that enclosure where God is not yet God, where God is thus unknown to himself, and, not being creator, is "nothing" (p. 50). According to them "neither an affirmation nor a negation is capable of carrying the weight of ultimate mystery. Only the openness of an interrogation can embrace what our mere thinking cannot encompass" (p. 55). Thus Panikkar leads us to an area of Indian thought which scholarship should delve deeper into, going beyond philosophical concepts and problems.

John B. Chethimattam

BULLETIN

The Christian Spiritual Father / Mother

One of the most interesting and stimulating meetings I have participated in recent years was the Fifth Cistercian Studies Symposium held at New Clairvaux Abbey, Vina, California, to explore the theme: *Spiritual Father: West and East*. The meeting brought together some fifty monks and nuns, active religious and laity, married and single, from fifteen or more nations. These were joined by spiritual masters from various eastern traditions and well qualified international scholars. Background papers had been distributed in advance so that the Symposium could be devoted to informed exchange. The blending of first rate scholarship and practical pastoral concern made for an unusually rich dialogue.

Throughout the meeting and in writing about it now there is a keen awareness of our pressing need for an "utrum" vocabulary. Not a neuter which sets aside both genders and reduces all to an it, but an 'utrum' which embraces the fullness of *both* femininity and masculinity. For what is said of the spiritual father applies totally and equally to the spiritual mother. Moreover, as the papers and discussion well brought out, our Christian tradition has insisted that the spiritual father must indeed also be a spiritual mother, following the archetypes of Mary and the Church. Indeed all Christians are to be spiritual mothers: "Who are my mother and my brother? ... Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me" (Mark 3: 33-35). As Christians we are all called to mother the Christ life in ourselves and in others.

A need

The concern that lay behind the Symposium was true renewal within the Cistercian tradition, as the sponsoring body, but also within the Christian community at large. The Jesuit

theologian, Daniel O'Hanlon of the General Theological Union at Berkely had spent a year on pilgrimage in Asia. He was on the point of undertaking a return journey, sponsored by the Center for the Study of New Religions, to try to ascertain why Americans have turned to the East in search of spiritual masters. He had already interviewed a number of Americans who had returned from the East. His findings thus far indicated a common response: seekers were able to find in the churches and synagogues of the West men of learning and organization but not men or women of *spiritual quality* with the ability to teach *concrete, practical ways* to enter into a deeper spiritual life.

These findings were confirmed by a number of interventions made during the very personal, honest and open sharing. Brother David Steindle-Rast gave a synthetic report on the various 'New Age' communities with which he has been involved. In these groups community has commonly held a central place – a community that is warm and supportive yet is in fact a by-product and not something directly sought. Groups that have come together primarily to find community have rarely succeeded. For the successful communities in most cases it has been a question of gathering around a master, whether it be the San-Francisco Zen Center, the Integral Yoga Institute of Swami Satchidananda or the Love Center in Denver gathered around a Roman Catholic tertiary. Always it seems to be a common unifying goal that produces a truly monastic environment that fosters spiritual growth. These 'New Age' groups are dynamically flexible, yet have a remarkable stability. They are made up of seekers and rarely is there any distinction made on the basis of sex.

A very moving moment came in the closing session of the Symposium when a hitherto silent young man, a student from the Institute of Cistercian Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, spoke up. He had been in a Catholic monastery for fourteen months – a disappointing experience for him – and was now in search of one where he could find a true spiritual father. He made an eloquent plea to each of the spiritual fathers and mothers present to make a commitment to being true spiritual fathers and mothers, men and women of personal holiness, embodying the Gospel in their lives, willing to respond to the frequently unspoken pleas of even unwanted children, willing to find and call forth the

fullness of the universe of God's love to be found in the individual who comes before them.

The young man indicated that sometimes those who ought to fulfill this pastoral service in the Christian community are taken up with 'greater and more universal' concerns, so that they are unwilling to give the time to father the individual. But more precisely he pointed to the fact that very many of those who fulfill roles in the Church in which one can rightly expect to include spiritual paternity (superiors, pastors, counselors, directors) are hesitant to accept this admittedly burdensome service. Exchanges during the Symposium bore this out.

It is true that the early monastic literature does show the spiritual father very reluctant to accept his role. And yet he repeatedly does, and sometimes with an audacious fullness. The hesitancy today seems sometimes to arise from the same sort of humble dispositions. But when these are the true source of the hesitancy, the humble man, when he realizes God wants him to serve in this way, does so with generosity. In fact, more often the hesitancy today seems to arise from a certain confusion about the role, a sense of inadequacy – which unfortunately all too often has some basis in fact – a false sense of egalitarianism, and sometimes a projection of one's own hang-ups in regard to paternalism.

Christian spiritual paternity today

There was a certain amount of very legitimate and necessary questioning about the precise understanding and practice of spiritual paternity for our times and whether this would really represent a continuation, degradation or mutation of the practice of earlier times. Indeed, and rightly, it was questioned whether 'father' is the best archetype for this relationship today. Others were suggested: friendship, midwife, wounded healer. But none seemed to capture the significance of this traditional term so fully. Our difficulties with the word seem to arise from the connotations coming from natural paternity and the problems surrounding the exercise of fatherhood in families today. But the Christian has to keep hold of the fact that all fatherhood descends ultimately from above and is named after that of the Father of Lights (Ephesians 3: 14-15, James 1: 17). The spiritual

father's role calls for him to be like Christ, making the Father present - "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30); "He who sees me, sees the Father" (John 14:9); and forming disciples to be sons of the Father in the likeness of Christ.

Friendship is certainly an important part of this paternal role: "I no longer call you servants... but friends, because I have made known to you all I have learned from the Father" (John 15:15) - but in itself it does not seem to express all that is involved here, all that the disciple legitimately seeks and expects when coming to a spiritual father.

Certainly there is within this relationship a handing on of teaching, and handing it on in a living way, out of the fullness of one's own lived experience. Yet this is not the sum total of the paternal role, nor even the most important part of it. What is desired and...needed is that the father, drawing on his own lived experience, can guide the son to realize his true self. By baptism the Christian has been made in some very real sense a true son of God, one with Christ, the only Son - "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20) - and he has been given Christ's Spirit as his own spirit - "The Spirit has been poured out in our hearts whereby we cry 'Abba' ('Father')'" (Romans 8:15). The Christian needs simply to learn how to be who he truly is, to appropriate his divinization and live out of its fullness. The spiritual father is one who in the fullness of the Spirit knows how to do this and how to help others to do the same. The gifts of wisdom, understanding and counsel are active in him.

Light from the East

A most interesting and enriching dimension of this meeting was the involvement and contributions of masters of the Asiatic countries. It was stressed that we do not turn to our brothers from the East in order to try to incorporate elements of their practice into ours. Above all, we do not want to continue a sort of colonialistic mentality that would now attempt to take possession of the spiritual riches of the East and exploit them in such a way that mysteries bearing life would be treated as mere techniques. Rather the hope is that our encounter with other religious traditions will lead to a mutual fecundation which will

stimulate the growth of values that lie hidden within our own traditions.

How far the human family has progressed toward an enriching global spiritual culture was vividly portrayed in the presence of Maezumi Rochi and his disciple. This Japanese Zen Master considered the young Jew from Brooklyn, on whom he had recently conferred the 'transmission', to be his first and principal disciple. The student in his turn showed how Zen had led him into a fuller understanding of his Jewish heritage and its Revelation.

Seeing how spiritual masters from the East were fulfilling in greater or lesser degree the many needs many young Christians were not finding fulfilled by spiritual fathers and mothers in their own tradition, we sought to bring some of these masters into our dialogue and to listen to them. It was truly profitable. We heard them with humility, simplicity and compassion, unhesitatingly take on the responsibility of master. Some of the descriptions of their role could certainly enliven us in our efforts to re-find and reassess this role in our own tradition:

The guru is the dispeller of darkness and the revealer of light. He is the destroyer of the sins of the disciple. He makes the disciple like himself. He is a man of vision, one who destroys ignorance and who gives knowledge. He imparts grace, bestowing joy and peace on the disciple. In a more simple manner, he must be a man of good conduct, without sin, firm in mind. He must be imbued with *sat* character that is real and truthful, because he has experienced truth. He is God-oriented and an indefectible friend of the disciple.

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The shaikh is the guide on the Path of Love. He is an exemplary being who lives according to the Quran and the Hadith, what the Prophet Mohammed—may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him—said, did or approved. He does not say one thing and do another. He leads to God according to the openness of the murid (disciple). The shaikh can be very close to God. If you take a glass of water

from the sea, what is in the glass is not the sea, yet it is the sea. This is how the shaikh is to God. The shaikh has the medicine which can cure the doubt and hesitation of the murid. He is generous with his secret and is concerned more for his murid than he is for himself. He knows when to remove the spiritual cataracts which prevent his murid from reaching the Highest Station.

I think we rightly hesitate to undertake a role in the life of another that is fraught with such expectations. Certainly the man who thinks he has all these qualities and sets himself up – puts out his shingle, as it were – as a spiritual father, is much deceived. We hesitate to think of anyone being formed in our own likeness. We are all disciples of Christ. We are to be formed only in his likeness. Yet Paul, who honestly admitted his weaknesses (e.g, 2 Corinthians 12:5,9) and the alien law in his members (Romans 7:23), did not hesitate to call himself a spiritual father (1 Corinthians 4:15; 2 Corinthians 6:13, 16), and to urge his disciples to be imitators of himself even as he was of Christ (1 Corinthians 4:15). The shaikh, the spiritual father, “is more concerned for his murid than he is for himself”.

A universal need

It is true, in Western Christianity (not in Eastern Christianity, where the spiritual father is still central in monastic and parochial life) through the development of institutions and structures, the community has to some extent taken on some of the formative office that a spiritual father or master fulfilled in the patristic age or in other cultures. It was also argued that in practice at least we can find in Christianity as in other religious traditions certain levels of spirituality. The shaikh, the master, is found only among the Sufis and not among Moslems in general. The master belongs to Zen and is not a common figure in popular Buddhism. All Christians are called to live a life of faith and the experience of faith, but not all are called to ‘mystical’ experience. It is these latter who need the special ministrations of the spiritual father. So the argument went. But there was not much readiness to accept this assertion in regard to Christianity. Indeed, various reasons were marshalled to argue for the universal

value of spiritual paternity in Christianity. Christian life is a communion, a giving and receiving, modeled on the inner life of the Trinity revealed to us. Christianity is a sacramental religion; the Christian ordinarily needs another human person to be for him or her a sacrament of the Father's love and provident care – a fact to which the New Testament gives ample witness. We are called upon to exercise in regard to others something of that unique mediatorship of Christ into whom we have been baptized. In actual fact, the richness of the theological content of the Christian concept of spiritual father goes far beyond any description of the role of guru, Zen Master or shaikh. Rightly, then, do we hesitate and fear to take on this demanding role, even though its response to our need for generativity makes it in some ways very attractive. But as an Orthodox spiritual father noted, while in natural paternity it is the father who makes the decision to become father, it is not initially thus in spiritual paternity. It is rather the son who comes and calls forth the father. Indeed one might not realize he has fathered a spirit-filled life in a particular son until some time after it has actually taken place.

In any case, one can only humbly respond to this call for service, painfully aware of his own inadequacies – which in their time may prove important assets in his compassionate service of his sons – and hopefully confident that the Father whose Spirit has inspired this son to look to him for this service will supply all that is needed because of the expectant faith of the son. The role for the Christian spiritual father, although greater, is yet easier, because he does not carry the burden alone. He can depend fully on the all-powerful Christ, the one who is ultimately master and father, with whom he is one.

Not only in the initiation of the relationship but throughout its duration, discernment and docility to the leading of the Spirit are paramount. He, and he alone, is the director. He is the one whom both father and son obey. What the father wants the son to imitate him in learning is to listen to the Spirit. The father needs always to be aware that true obedience – a listening, *obaudire* – which is meant to be a school leading to evangelical freedom can easily degenerate into some kind of immature and even infantile dependence, an abdication of human freedom and responsibility. As our Lord said, one must judge the tree by its fruits